## *Note:* *You will need Google Earth to view our maps. If you don’t already have Google Earth™ on your computer please visit our* [*Setup*](http://www.goldmapsonline.com/setup.html) *page to get your free copy…*

## A modern approach to gold maps…

Gold Maps Online™ uses current active and abandoned gold claims to precisely guide the prospector to gold bearing areas on federal public lands. The fold-out-paper gold map publishers use surface geology and historic mining data. We feel our approach is far more precise and provides the modern prospector with a distinct advantage by putting them right on top of the gold—which in turn—reduces the cost of their prospecting effort. Our customers routinely save $100’s in gas alone by just knowing where to go.

## How our gold maps are organized…

All states are comprised of four (4) maps each: One active lode map, one active placer map, one closed lode map, and one closed placer map.

The first two letters of the gold map file name indicate the state. The third letter indicates the status, open or closed, and the fourth letter tells you if it’s a placer claim or a lode claim.

**For example**: AZ\_AL.KMZ means this is the Arizona Active Lode claim map. ID\_CP.KMZ means this is the Idaho Closed Placer claim map. WY\_CL.KMZ means this is the Wyoming Closed Lode claim map.

**The color codes are as follows**: Yellow indicates active lode claims. Orange indicates active placer claims. Blue indicates closed lode claims. And green is used to indicate closed placer claims. You can always [contact us](http://www.goldmapsonline.com/contact.php) if you are not sure what the file names or colors indicate.

**Closed = Abandoned: If it’s closed you can reclaim it…**

## Understanding the grids and sections

When you first open one of the maps you will see little boxes throughout the state. These boxes represent the "Section" part of the Meridian, Township, Range, Section (MTRS) platting system we use to identify property boundaries in the lower 48 states. These Sections represent roughly 640 acres each. When you zoom in and click on a Section you are told which quadrant (160 acres) of the Section the claim(s) is located in, the claim type (placer or lode), and the claim status (active or abandoned).

Generally speaking a claim will be 20 acres in size, so if there are 3 claims in a given quadrant then that probably means 100 acres of that 160 acre quadrant are available for prospecting. Unfortunately, it is impossible to show exact claim boundaries in the lower 48 states because we use the MTRS boundary system—verses Alaska which uses GPS coordinates making exact claim boundaries possible.

Once you run a mining claims report using LR2000 (explained below) you can often-times search the contact information provided in the claims report to call the claim holders directly. They are usually very willing to describe their claim boundaries in hopes of avoiding any confusion regarding what area their claim covers. They may even be willing to meet you in the field to point out what areas are available for you to explore and sample.

## Using the active gold mining claim maps as a guide…

The active gold mining claim maps will show you where gold is currently being found. Once you identify an area of interest and have noted the location of existing claims, you can then use Google Earth™ to explore the surrounding area looking for non-claimed prospecting locations that show promise—like some sharp bend in a creek or river. With Gold Maps Online™ and Google Earth™, rather than going to an area and randomly prospecting and exploring—you can now explore an area with your computer and generate latitude and longitude coordinates of specific sites that show promise. And using Google Earth’s distance and altitude measuring tools, you know exactly how far you have to go and what the climb and terrain might be like. And we can’t say enough about Google Earth’s incredible satellite imagery which allows you to “know” the area before ever getting there.

Also, after you’ve identified those promising areas, Google Earth™ will show you where the access roads and campsites are. Or you might want to know how close the nearest store, gas station or restaurant is. You might even want to prospect from the comfort of a hotel room. Whatever your plans, Gold Maps Online™ and Google Earth™ will get you closer to gold than any gold map before us—and we help you do most of the prospecting and planning from the comfort of your home.

## Using the abandoned gold mining claim maps as a guide…

Many active gold mining claims today were at one time abandoned. Some claims are abandoned because they’ve become too difficult to access for the current owner. That might not be the case for someone else with an ATV. Some owners simply can’t work the property as planned so they just let the claim go. That claim may sit in the middle of a long line of claims that follow a popular gold prospecting creek or river. Gold claims get abandoned every year for a variety of reasons so it might be worth it to check them out, particularly if they are close by your area of interest.

Our gold maps reveal thousands of abandoned claims that are very near or surrounded by active gold mining claims. If you are planning to prospect an abandoned claim, be sure to run an LR2000 report to verify the claim is still abandoned. You can also check with your regional [Bureau of Land Management](http://www.blm.gov/lr2000/links.htm) office. The BLM always has the last word on a federal claims status.

## Using MTRS codes to search LR2000…

For those interested in learning more about mining claims in a given area we provide the Meridian, Township, Range and Section (MTRS) codes in the popup data window for each Section. You can then take those codes to the [BLM’s LR2000 database](http://www.blm.gov/landandresourcesreports/rptapp/menu.cfm?appCd=2) and generate a [Pub MC Geo Report](http://www.blm.gov/landandresourcesreports/rptapp/criteria_select.cfm?rptId=19&APPCD=2&). The results of your search will show a list of claims in the area with links to more details about each claim. The MTRS ¼ Section data we provide—NW, NE, SW and SE—will give you an idea of where the claims are located within a given Section. If you are a first-time user to LR2000 you should [read this tutorial](http://www.blm.gov/lr2000/lr2000pubrpts/LR2000_Public_Tutorial_for_Web.pdf). Or this [Pub MC Geo Report help guide](http://www.blm.gov/lr2000/lr2000pubrpts/PubMiningClaims/5_RPT_mcgeo_report.pdf). Your regional BLM office provides [telephone support](http://www.blm.gov/lr2000/links.htm) regarding LR2000 queries.

**Disclaimer:** Despite appearances and capabilities, it’s important to note here that Gold Maps Online™ is not a mining claim title research tool—we are only a guide to gold bearing areas. When it comes to mining claims on federal lands—our specialty—the BLM always has the last word on a claims actual status. And even they will frame their answers with “to the best of our knowledge.” That’s because someone may have just filed papers earlier in the day and that filing doesn’t appear in the database yet.

## Interpreting active/abandoned mining claim overlap in the maps…

If you see overlap between active placer and active lode claims this is usually because there are both active placer and lode claims in that Section. It might also indicate claimants are on a particularly rich claim and chose to file placer, lode and mill site claims on top of each other to avoid any nuisance claims by another party. The same applies to overlap between active and abandoned claims.